

On March 9th HORTICULTURAL MOTIFS IN ART, an exhibition sponsored by The Print Club of Cleveland in collaboration with The Garden Center of Greater Cleveland, opened in Gallery VIII of the Cleveland Museum of Art and will continue through April 24th. Represented will be over 100 items from the collections of the Museum, the Garden Center - now in its 25th anniversary year - and from private individuals in Cleveland.

The show consists primarily of Museum prints and drawings and Garden Center books - all emphasizing the botanical treatment of flower prints during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. These scientifically accurate and artistically skillful flower prints are in direct contrast to the earlier simple black and white woodcuts used for illustrating botanical textbooks.

Among the volumes of rare flower prints from the Garden Center are THE TEMPLE OF FLORA and LES ROSES. THE TEMPLE OF FLORA - perhaps the most ambitious flower project of this period - is a large folio published between 1799 and 1807 by Dr. Robert John Thornton, Professor of Medical Botany at Guy's Hospital, London. It was a gigantic and costly enterprise in which the best artists and engravers were engaged. A variety of processes was employed and the outstanding mezzotinters and aquatint engravers put forth their best efforts in the beautiful large flower plates which are among the earliest to be printed in color in England. These 32 large prints - the first in which flowers were represented against their natural landscape backgrounds - are strikingly beautiful and dramatic compositions.

Pierre Joseph Redouté, who published the three large folio volumes of LES ROSES between 1817 and 1824, was responsible for introducing stipple engraving into France. Through this process 19th century French engravers achieved a technical perfection never

before approached in flower prints. Redouté, who mastered the process while studying under the great Bartolozzi in England, furnished the drawings for most of his own plates. He had a great capacity for bringing out the individual character and charm of the different flowers he portrayed.

The Museum will exhibit fruit and flower prints representing many of the artists of this period. Included in the variety will be several individual Thornton prints, eight of the Redouté roses as well as many other fruit and flower prints by Redouté the famous pair of flower and fruit pieces by Richard Earlom, four of Furber's "Twelve Months of Fruit" prints and eight of his "Twelve Months of Flowers" prints.

To supplement these botanical subjects the Garden Center is providing plants and fresh flower arrangements while the Museum and private collections are showing paintings and watercolors by Monet (SPRING FLOWERS), Redon, Renoir (VASE OF ROSES), Keller, Sommer, Charles Dumuth, Kae Dorn Cass and many others.

The Cleveland Museum of Art began their unusual collection of rare flower prints in 1940 when the Print Club of Cleveland presented the Museum with a group of fifteen prints and one drawing to establish THE DONALD GRAY MEMORIAL COLLECTION. Donald Gray, at one time president of the Print Club, was Landscape Consultant and author of the Daily Garden Column for the Cleveland Press, was one of the city's foremost landscape architects and was designer of the Horticultural Gardens of Cleveland, now renamed the Donald Gray Lakefront Gardens.